

County of Riverside

RIVERSIDE OFFICE:
4080 Lemon Street, 5th Floor
Riverside, CA 92502-1647
(951) 955-1040
Fax (951) 955-2194



DISTRICT OFFICE/MAILING ADDRESS:
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 222
Palm Desert, CA 92260-2574
(760) 863-8211
Fax (760) 863-8905

SUPERVISOR JOHN J. BENOIT FOURTH DISTRICT

Oct. 28, 2010

California Energy Commission
Media and Public Communications Office
1516 Ninth Street, MS-29
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

DOCKET

09-AFC-10

DATE	OCT 28 2010
RECD.	NOV 10 2010

Dear Commissioners:

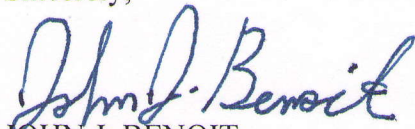
Riverside County, in responding to the State of California Executive Order S-14-08 requiring 33 percent of the total electricity sales by 2020 be from renewable energy sources, is attempting to provide reasonable and thoughtful direction regarding the design and placement of the renewable energy facilities while meeting the goal required by the Executive Order. To that end, I have considered the Rice Solar Energy Project (RSEP) (Docket No. 09-AFC-10) and, while all projects have impact, believe that the level of impact from the RSEP is acceptable.

In reviewing the written testimony of Terrence O'Brien, Deputy Director of the Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division for the California Energy Commission, for the October 29, 2010 proceedings, I have the following responses. Essentially Mr. O'Brien had three concerns in his filing dated October 21, 2010: the visual impacts, the remote location of the RSEP, and the lack of proximity to existing transmission infrastructure.

- Visual impact is a common issue relating to solar projects. While there is a visual impact from this project, there is a visual impact from any solar project. With current technology this is simply unavoidable.
- While Mr. O'Brien considers the location of the project to be remote, he also states that Solar Reserve is considering a future Application for Certification of a project in the same vicinity. Possibly this will result in a cluster of projects that will impact a similar area and benefit from one transmission corridor.
- The RSEP site, once part of the historic Rice Army Airfield, is disturbed land. We agree with the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) Independent Science Advisors when they repeatedly emphasize in their report, "to the degree possible, *site all renewable energy developments on previously disturbed land.*"
- While the transmission infrastructure is not in place, it should be understood that over half of the 10-mile transmission line will follow an existing dirt road.
- Predation by ravens from transmission lines and towers is and will continue to be a management issue not solely related to the development of renewable energy projects. The Science Advisory Report acknowledges the need to employ "deterrent devices to discourage perching by ravens and raptors on transmission lines, towers, or other structures."

In considering projects such as the RSEP, we must weigh the positives against the negatives. In light of the requirements we are facing under Executive Order S-14-08 and the fact that this project does not disturb a large swath of undisturbed desert, I believe this project should receive approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John J. Benoit". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Benoit" clearly legible.

JOHN J. BENOIT
Fourth District Supervisor

JJB:das